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For Immediate Release

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Walden Announces Regional Summits to Advance the Fight Against Meth

*Town halls will bring community partners together to discuss issue, provide
information on what can be done at local level*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Congressman Greg Walden (R-OR) today announced a series of seven regional town halls focused on the scourge of methamphetamine (meth) in our local communities to be held during February and early March. Walden, along with invited experts such as law enforcement, anti-drug coalitions, federal officials and the Governor's office, will discuss the rampant use and production problems facing our communities, and what can be done at the local level to help advance the fight against meth. The general public is invited and encouraged to attend a summit in their region.

"From the Cascades east to Idaho, and from the Columbia River south to California and Nevada, this drug has plagued both urban and rural communities throughout the Second Congressional District," continued Walden. "I look forward to bringing community coalitions, law enforcement, and local, state and federal government to these summits so that we can have an in-depth discussion on what can be done to attack this problem at all levels."

"This is an epidemic," said Walden. "It is not just those who use meth that pay a high price; we all pay for the ramifications of this toxic substance. Along with the increase in meth usage has come a dramatic increase in theft, violence, children living in drug houses and the need for substantial tax dollars to fund the enhanced law enforcement required to fight this problem in our communities. Quite simply put – meth is a highly addictive, destructive drug that we must combat at every level."

In 2004, Oregon's Second Congressional District had 20% of the state's population, but 35% of total meth lab seizures, indicating an alarming trend for the counties of Eastern, Central and Southern Oregon. "This drug affects us all," he said. "I believe these forums will be very informative for everyone; the threats posed by this drug are too close for any of us to ignore."

The schedule for the Congressman's meth summits is as follows. More information on individual forums, including specific sites and experts who will be giving presentations, will be released when confirmed.

Medford: Friday, February 11; 1:30 PM-3:30 PM
Grants Pass: Saturday, February 12; 8:30 AM-10:30 AM
Hood River: Friday, February 18; 3:00 PM-5:00 PM
Redmond: Thursday, February 24; 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Klamath Falls: Friday, February 25; 12:30 PM-2:30 PM
Baker City: Friday, March 4; 1:30 PM-3:30 PM
Pendleton: Friday, March 4; 6:00 PM-8:00 PM

Congressman Walden represents the Second District of Oregon, which includes 20 counties in southern, central and eastern Oregon. He is a Deputy Whip in the House leadership structure and a member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce as well as the Committee on Resources.

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